Synopsis

On

Effect of Positive Psychological Variables on Employee Engagement: A Study of Knowledge Workers in India

For Registration

in

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Business Management

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I. Topic of Research

Effect of Positive Psychological Variables on Employee Engagement: A Study of Knowledge Workers in India

II. Introduction

Employee engagement is a rising concern within companies and has now become crucial (Besieux *et al.,* 2018). As per the recent report by Gallup (2020) over 51% of employees are not engaged in their work and 13% of employees are actively disengaged and the number of disengagements among employees is fluctuating too. However, despite the fluctuations, only 36% of the workforce are found to be engaged in their duties. With the percentage of not engaged employees' being so high, employees seeking new job opportunities to search for better work is also increasing. Moreover, a reduction in employee engagement rate is found more in the case of male employees than for female employees (Harter, 2020). Besides, a decrease in employee engagement is found more in employees working at numerous managerial positions because of rising stress levels among them (Harter, 2020).

The concept of engagement came in 1990 when Kahn introduced the concept by differentiating engaged employees from disengaged ones and interpreted engagement as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.” Kahn (1990) also introduced three psychological conditions that affect individual's engagement and non-engagement. Studies in this area took a boom when Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) conducted a study on engagement by explaining three components of engagement namely: vigor, absorption, and dedication.

A career in being a knowledge worker has no boundaries and here personal resources are significant in enhancing knowledge workers' engagement (Toth *et al*., 2019). The term 'knowledge workers' has been used by Davenport *et al*. (2002) who defined knowledge workers as those who adept and create knowledge (Toth *et al.*, 2019). However, this study aims at focusing on knowledge workers' engagement because modern economy highlights the need to conduct research on knowledge workers' as the way of working in the modern economy is changing (Toth *et al*., 2019). Moreover, as the environment and current situations are different from the previous one, so the role of knowledge workers is also rising in this modern era (Toth *et al*., 2019). As there is variety in the nature of knowledge workers, so it is mandatory to focus on the factors impacting their engagement level as studies regarding knowledge workers is scarce (Toth *et al*., 2019).

Employee engagement is associated with positive outcome like engaged employees perform better than disengaged ones. But, with the increase in the number of disengaged employees in the total workforce, unhappiness is also spreading in the workplace as individuals who are not engaged in their work leave the workplace for better opportunities and are not attached with the work psychologically. Moreover, actively disengaged employees affect the whole organization because of having a bad experience regarding their work (Harter, 2020). Thus, organizations need to focus on the factors that will help enhance engagement of employees towards their work as it is associated with numerous favorable outcomes like engagement helps in enhancing organizational citizenship behavior (Sun & Yoon, 2020), engaged personnel are more pleased with their life (Chughtai, 2018), performs better and use to show the behavior which even though is not part of his task and which highlights his level of commitment towards the work (Buil *et al.*, 2019) and are less likely to leave the organization. With engagement being negatively associated with turnover intentions (Lee *et al.*, 2019), it is essential to focus on ways that will help enhance engagement of employees. So, to increase the engagement level among employees and to reduce the number of disengaged employees, numerous factors need to be considered which can help increase the engagement level.

With engagement resulting in numerous favorable outcomes, engagement is also affected by many factors like whenever employees have favorable perceptions regarding CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) practices being followed in the workplace, their engagement level increases (Besieux *et al*., 2018). Similarly, employee's feeling of belongingness towards their organization is favorably associated with their engagement level (Buil *et al*., 2019). Furthermore, when employees are informed about their performance by providing them

feedback, such feedback about their performance helps in increasing their engagement level (Lee *et al*., 2019). Besides, engagement is also influenced by numerous other antecedents like perceived organizational support, procedural and distributive justice, perceived supervisory support, and rewards and recognition (Saks, 2006).

Along with employee engagement, positive psychological variables are also favorably associated with many favorable outcomes like employee's perception of virtuousness practices being followed by the organizations helps in enhancing engagement level of employees which results in better performance (Ahmed *et al.,* 2018). Similarly, leaders focusing on serving their followers helps in improving the overall performance of the followers (Peng & Chen, 2020). Moreover, psychological capital being a positive psychological variable plays an important role in enhancing employee's satisfaction with their job (Wirawan *et al*., 2020). With positive psychological variables being associated with all the aforementioned favorable outcomes, such outcomes are not only benefiting the employees but is beneficial for the organizations too as it helps in retaining the employees which helps in reducing turnover intentions. This highlights the need to conduct more research on positive psychological variables to enhance the knowledge regarding other favorable outcomes associated with it and their impact on knowledge workers.

Engagement is affected by positive psychological variables like virtuousness practices being followed by an organization (Singh *et al.,* 2018) and taking care of the well-being of employees (Malinowski & Lim, 2015). Furthermore, personal resources also play an important role in influencing employees' engagement like mindfulness (Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019), and psychological capital (Wirawan *et al*., 2020). Moreover, other positive psychological variables namely positive leadership styles like servant leadership (Aboramadan *et al*., 2020) and transformational leadership (Lai *et al*., 2020) helps in enhancing employees' work engagement level. But studies on positive psychological variables impacting employee engagement are scarce (Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019; Singh *et al*., 2018) which also highlights the need to conduct research on positive psychological variables impacting employee engagement.

Based on numerous antecedents and outcomes of engagement, this study aims at focusing on the impact of positive psychological variables on the engagement of employees. Moreover, this study suggests areas on which research can be conducted in the future, and such research will help enhance employee engagement level. Even though there is a growing field of literature on employees work engagement but studies regarding positive psychological variables impacting

engagement is scarce as suggested by Gunasekara & Zheng (2019) that mindfulness-engagement relationship have not been examined to a large extent. According to Singh *et al.* (2018) till date a smaller number of researches have been conducted on examining virtuousness and engagement relationship. Also, limited studies have been conducted on knowledge workers' engagement (Toth *et al*., 2019) which highlights the need to conduct more studies on positive psychological variables impacting knowledge workers' engagement. Thus, it is interesting to study the effect of positive psychology on knowledge workers' engagement as even though studies have been conducted in past on engagement but no researcher have made an attempt to conduct a study on knowledge worker's engagement by taking into consideration all these positive psychological variables collectively. Here, to highlight positive psychological variables, the umbrella term used for such variables is "positive psychology" comprising of positive organizational behavior (POB) and positive organizational scholarship (POS) (Donaldson & Ko, 2010).

To address the aforementioned gaps regarding positive psychological variables and their impact on knowledge workers' engagement, the present study focuses on numerous positive psychological variables. Along with this, employee well-being being one of the positive psychological variables is also included in the study to determine its intervening role between independent variables and dependent variable association.

III. Review of Literature

Review consists of details regarding employee engagement and numerous positive psychological variables affecting it. Furthermore, the review consists of numerous research gaps in the area, and on the basis of gaps, objectives and hypotheses are formulated.

Employee Engagement

Kahn (1990) gave the concept of engagement by differentiating engaged employees from disengaged ones and interpreted personal engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances." Moreover, Kahn (1990) defined personal disengagement as "the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defined themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances." The engagement has been explained using meaningfulness, safety and availability (Kahn, 1990). Furthermore, Kahn (1990) explained

these three conditions as psychological conditions affecting engagement. To reduce the disengagement level of employees, it is imperative to focus on these three states. The three psychological conditions are **psychological meaningfulness** that refers to "a feeling that one is receiving a return on investment of one's self in a currency of physical, cognitive, or emotional energy", **psychological safety** refers to "sense of being able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career" and **psychological availability** means "the sense of having the physical, emotional, or psychological resources to personally engage at a particular moment" (Kahn, 1990). As per the definition given by Kahn (1990), the need for engagement arose so that employees can express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally.

Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) identified three engagement elements and explained engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption." Furthermore, engagement has been considered as "a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior" (Schaufeli *et al*., 2002). To measure engagement, Schaufeli *et al*. (2002) generated a scale called the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) that helps in determining different components of engagement. The very three dimensions of the UWES scale are vigor, absorption and dedication. **Vigor** here refers to "high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties", **absorption** means "being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly, and one has difficulties with detaching oneself" and **dedication** refers to the "feelings of a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge" (Schaufeli *et al*., 2002).

In 2006, Saks additionally defined engagement by dividing it into organizational and job engagement and indicated the difference between the two. Saks (2006) developed a scale to measure job and organizational engagement which highlights an individual's engagement with the job and with the organization. However, in a study conducted on predictors and consequences of different aspects of engagement namely: job and organizational engagement, Saks (2006) found that individuals are more engaged towards their job as compared with their organization. Moreover, Saks (2006) observed differences in the predictors and outcomes affecting job engagement and organizational engagement which shows that though both of these are the type of engagement still they are different from each other concerning the variables affecting them as well as concerning their outcomes. However, engagement with

respect to knowledge workers is influenced by many factors such that knowledge workers who are satisfied with their life are engaged in their work (Toth *et al*., 2019).

With engagement being defined by different authors focusing on different types of engagement like work engagement and employee engagement, work engagement is concerned with an employees' subconscious state of intellect while doing the task (Schaufeli *et al*., 2002), whereas employee engagement focusses on employee's engagement towards their job as well as towards the organization (Saks, 2006). Based on this, the study aims to focus on knowledge workers' engagement.

Positive Psychological Variables

Positive organizational psychology which can also be termed as positive psychology can be defined as "the scientific study of positive subjective experiences and traits in the workplace and positive organizations, and its application to improve the effectiveness and quality of life in organizations" (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Donaldson & Ko (2010) observed that positive psychology has become a universal word used to encourage and coordinate study, implementation, and scholarship on qualities, values, excellence, stability, stability, resilience, flow, and overall optimum functioning. This is similar to the observation by J. Mills *et al.* (2013) considering positive psychology at work as a universal term. Here, positive psychology has been considered as an umbrella term for positive psychological variables comprising positive organizational behavior (POB) and positive organizational scholarship (POS). Therefore, the popular source of positive psychology is shared by POB and POS and demonstrates the significance of the empirical method in knowledge creation but still have some differences (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). With several variables affecting engagement of employees, positive psychological variables play an important role in enhancing engagement level of employees. Thus, this study aims at determining the impact of numerous positive psychological variables namely: organizational virtuousness, employee well-being, psychological capital (Donaldson & Ko, 2010), mindfulness (Malinowski & Lim, 2015; Pinck & Sonnentag, 2018), psychological empowerment (J. Mills *et al.*, 2013) and positive leadership styles namely: transformational leadership (Donaldson & Ko, 2010) and servant leadership (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020) on employee engagement. Numerous positive psychological variables affecting engagement are as follows:

Organizational Virtuousness

Organizational virtuousness refers to "individuals' actions, collective activities, cultural attributes, or processes that enable dissemination and perpetuation of virtuousness in an organization" (Cameron *et al*., 2004), and virtuousness refers to "what individuals and organizations aspire to be when they are at their very best" (Cameron *et al*., 2004).

To measure Organizational Virtuousness, Cameron *et al.* (2004) created and validated a measuring instrument consisting of five sub-constructs namely-

Organizational optimism- It means that the members of the company feel that they will thrive even while facing severe hurdles.

Organizational forgiveness- It means that the employees will be forgiven for the mistakes made unintentionally and will be treated as chance for acquiring knowledge in the future.

Organizational trust- implies that the organization is governed by politeness, consideration, and appreciation and that people depend upon those, along with superior.

Organizational compassion- It means that individuals look after one another and action of compassion and consideration are normal in the organization.

Organizational integrity- It mentions that dignity, credibility, and integrity encompass the business.

Singh *et al*. (2018) found a favorable association between virtuousness and engagement with happiness mediating the relation between the two but partially only such that employee's perception of virtuousness practices being followed by the organization enhance their engagement level towards their work by enhancing employee's happiness (Singh *et al.*, 2018). This signifies that when an organization follows virtuousness practices hereby focusing on providing a better environment to the employees, employees, in turn, reciprocates the organization with an enhanced level of engagement (Singh *et al*., 2018). Moreover, Ahmed *et al.* (2018) found that organizational virtuousness is favorably associated with engagement such that virtuousness and engagement are correlated with each other, and engagement acts as a mediator in the virtuousness-performance relationship. This thus signifies that an environment of virtuousness enhances employee's engagement towards their work which thus helps in improving and enhancing their performance (Ahmed *et al*., 2018). Moreover, virtuousness favorably impacts employee's feeling of identification and belongingness towards their

organization (Hur *et al*., 2017). Similarly, Sun & Yoon (2020) also observed a favorable association between virtuousness and engagement.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership refers to "an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader, emphasizing leader behaviors that focus on follower development, and de-emphasizing glorification of the leader" (Hale & Fields, 2007). On a review being conducted by Van Dierendonck (2011), six features of servant leadership style have been defined as follows: servant leaders inspire and grow their believers; display modesty; are genuine; embrace individuals for who they are; offer encouragement and vision, and are leaders working to enhance society as a whole. On a study being conducted by Huertas-Valdivia *et al*. (2019) servant leadership style found favorably impacting the hotel employee's engagement level. Servant leadership is in fact a better influencer of organizational satisfaction outcomes then authentic leadership style influencing through engagement (Huertas-Valdivia *et al*., 2019). But Aboramadan *et al.* (2020) argued that academic's engagement is not directly influenced by servant leadership, but the relationship is influenced by mediating variables such as- intrinsic motivation, employee's feeling of ownership towards their organization, and person-job-fit. In addition to this, servant leadership style followed by a manager favorably impacts employee's performance via psychological climate and engagement (Peng & Chen, 2020). Also, servant leadership enhanced the satisfaction of academic employees towards their jobs which results in impacting their engagement favorably (Aboramadan *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, Chughtai (2018) also found a favorable association between servant leadership and engagement of employees towards their work which in turn is favorably associated with life satisfaction.

Psychological Capital

Psychological capital refers to "an individual's positive psychological state of development characterized by having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) to succeed; and when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success" (Luthans *et al*., 2007). Psychological capital comprises four sub-constructs namely: self-efficacy, hope, resiliency, and optimism (Luthans *et al*., 2007). Psychological capital enhances work engagement through employee satisfaction

with the job (Wirawan *et al*., 2020). A high-performance work system is favorably associated with resilience which further helps in enhancing employee engagement (Cooke *et al.*, 2019). In a study being conducted on travel agency employees, Dai *et al.* (2019) claimed that employee resilience favorably impacts the engagement level of employees. Organizations that focus on learning and follow the learning environment help to build resilience among employees which results in making employees engaged (Malik & Garg, 2020). Self-efficacy is one of the psychological capital sub-construct that favorably impact engagement (Karatepe *et al*., 2019). This finding is similar to the findings by Albrecht & Marty (2020).

Self-efficacy is positively associated with engagement which is further related to positive outcomes (Karatepe *et al*., 2019). Also, self-efficacy mediates the relationship between the support that employees receive from their family and their engagement level towards their work (Karatepe *et al*., 2019). Ibrahim *et al*. (2019) further gave a contribution to self-efficacy and engagement literature by researching call center employees and found that, the support that the employees receive from their supervisor helps in enhancing employee's self-efficacy which helps in enhancing their engagement. Moreover, an increase in work engagement further helps in reducing turnover intentions (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2019). Among the four psychological capital sub-constructs, the study aims at focusing on resilience to determine its impact on knowledge workers' engagement.

Transformational Leadership

According to Bass (1998), transformational leadership style consists of five factors which describes transformational leadership as follows:

Idealized influence (attributed)- refers to the extent to which employees recognize the importance, trust, conviction, authority, and ethical or moral orientation of their supervisors; their ability to align with these characteristics; and a deviation from self-interest to a broader common goal.

Idealized influence (behaviors)- refers to the leader's behavior which highlights their values as well as belief and moral considerations.

Inspirational motivation- refers to the leader's ability to express expectations to enable and empower staff to accomplish the desired objectives.

Intellectual stimulation- highlights the supervisor's ability to focus on change and guiding the employees to do so, and introducing innovativeness to deal with issues and,

Individualized consideration- focuses on support and guidance by a leader to the employees (Antonakis & House, 2013).

Transformational leadership results in better job performance via engagement (Buil *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior relationship are favorable with identification and engagement acting as a mediator in the relation (Buil *et al*., 2019). The aforesaid relationship is also mediated by empowerment which represents that employees have sufficient information and resources access (Amor *et al*., 2020). Transformational leadership is favorably associated with an employee's performance of their tasks as well as their helping behavior by enhancing their engagement level (Lai *et al*., 2020). Lee *et al.* (2019) claimed that transformational leadership enhances engagement via job resources in such a manner that the transformational leadership style followed by the leader significantly impacts job resources which results in enhancing employee's engagement towards their work.

New ways of working like open workplace practices being adopted by the organizations help in enhancing employee's engagement level with transformational leadership mediating this relation (Gerards *et al*., 2018). Similarly, Sahu *et al.* (2018) observed a positive association between transformational leadership and engagement. Employee's perception of corporate social responsibility being fulfilled by the organization is mediated in the transformational leadership and engagement association (Besieux *et al.*, 2018).

Mindfulness

Mindfulness has been defined by Brown & Ryan (2003) as focusing on the current moment in mind and acknowledging the current moment the way, it is. Mindfulness has been described as a characteristic that differs from individual to individual (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Mindfulness has been defined as a construct comprising of two facets namely: self-regulation of attention (refers to being attentive over a long period) and orientation to experience (having an attitude of being curious to know about the direction where the mind roams whenever it set free (Bishop *et al*., 2004).

Gunasekara & Zheng (2019) found that mindfulness is significantly related to engagement. Moreover, different sub-constructs of mindfulness are also substantially linked to work engagement. Moreover, the mindfulness level of employees is significantly related to engagement and well-being such that a higher level of mindfulness means a greater level of

engagement and well-being with psychological capital and positive emotions mediates the relation between the two. However, mindfulness indirectly affects engagement through positive emotions (Malinowski & Lim, 2015). Furthermore, psychological capital also mediates the relationship partially (Kotzé, 2018). Likewise, in a longitudinal study being conducted by Matsuo (2020) mindfulness was found to be indirectly associated with engagement with employee's strength use mediating the relationship between the two. Different mindfulness facets positively influence the engagement of employees with positive emotions and psychological resources mediating this relation (Malinowski & Lim, 2015).

However, mindfulness impacts engagement through mediating variables and not directly (Malinowski & Lim, 2015). Furthermore, a positive association between mindfulness and engagement is there such that mindfulness is associated with enhancing employee engagement which favorably impacts employee's well-being and helps in enhancing their satisfaction level (Zivnuska *et al*., 2016).

Based on aforementioned positive psychological variables affecting engagement, study aims at focusing on several positive psychological variables to study their impact on engagement.

The Mediating Role of Employee Well-being between Positive Psychological Variables and Employee Engagement

The concept of well-being has been explained by defining three types of well-being: (a) psychological well-being which denotes the contentment of employees with the organization and numerous practices being followed in the workspace; (b) physical well-being which mainly focuses on the physical health of an employee and its various outcomes; (c) social well-being which refers to social networks that an employee is having in the workplace as well as the individuals' insight of fairness and equality in the workspace (Grant *et al*., 2007).

Organizational virtuousness being one of the positive psychological variables positively influences psychological well-being (Ahmed *et al.*, 2018; Magnier-Watanabe *et al*., 2020). Moreover, organizational virtuousness is favorably associated with affective well-being and well-being mediating the virtuousness-performance relationship such that employee's perception of the organization following virtuousness practices helps in increasing the well-being of workforce (Ahmed *et al.*, 2018). Singh *et al.* (2018) found that organizational virtuousness practices being followed by organizations help in enhancing employee's sense of happiness which influences their engagement favorably. Furthermore, happiness intervenes in

virtuousness and engagement relationships (Singh *et al.*, 2018). Thus, an employee's happiness increases whenever they feel that the organization follows virtuousness practices (Singh *et al.*, 2018). Likewise, Magnier-Watanabe *et al.* (2020) performed a comparative study among workforce of France and Japan and found that well-being affects the virtuousness-performance relationship partially by acting as a mediator between the two.

Similarly, Puolakanaho *et al.* (2018) performed research on employees facing burnout in their work and concluded that mindfulness skills are significantly related to employee's well-being. Similarly, leader's mindfulness results in a transformational leadership style being followed by the leader which then impacts employee's well-being (Pinck & Sonnentag, 2018). Moreover, a leader's mindfulness is positively associated with positive affect as being one of the well-being components (Pinck & Sonnentag, 2018). Also, employee's psychological capital being another positive psychological variable positively influences their well-being and well-being is positively associated with employees' attitude towards their work (Singhal & Rastogi, 2018). Gupta & Shaheen (2018) also found a positive association between psychological capital and well-being with psychological capital acting as a mediator in engagement and well-being association. In a study on athletic department employees, Kim *et al.* (2019) observed that a supportive climate that is characterized by the support employees receive from other members as well as supervisors and meaningful work directly influences employee's psychological capital which therefore results in impacting their psychological well-being effectively.

Furthermore, transformational leadership being one of the positive psychological variables is favorably associated with psychological well-being which thus favorably impacts an individual's core self-evaluation which highlights an employee's appraisal about his capability (Ding *et al*., 2020). Moreover, the personal relationship between employer and employee developed through interactions between them acts as a moderator in transformational leadership and psychological well-being association (Ding *et al*., 2020).

In another study being conducted on different dimensions of servant leadership, positive associations have been observed between servant leadership's dimensions and employee's satisfaction with their job (Farrington & Lillah, 2019). However, Farrington & Lillah (2019) reported an unfavorable association between humility being one of the servant leadership dimensions and employee's satisfaction with their job. Clarence *et al.* (2020) found a favorable association between servant leadership style followed by the leader and well-being. Moreover, aforesaid leadership was found to be favorably associated with psychological capital which

thus was favorably associated with psychological well-being (Clarence *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, a positive association is there between servant leadership and positive effect being a well-being indicator and positive affect significantly predicts employee's life satisfaction (Li *et al*., 2018).

Employee's perception of happiness (being an employee well-being indicator) is significantly associated with work engagement such that happiness mediates the relationship between virtuousness and engagement (Singh *et al*., 2018). Whenever employees feel happier, they work harder and feels engaged in their work (Singh *et al*., 2018). Furthermore, positive emotions found to intervene in the resilience-engagement relationship partially (Wang *et al.*, 2017) such that the transformational leadership style helps in building positive emotions which help in enhancing employee's well-being and increase in well-being is favorably associated with engaging employees (Wang *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, positive emotions being one of the employee well-being dimensions is positively associated with engagement such that positive effect acts as an intervening variable between different mindfulness dimensions and engagement (Malinowski & Lim, 2015). Therefore, employees' sense of being aware of internal and external environment positively influence their emotions which thus helps in enhancing their engagement level (Malinowski & Lim, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Based on literature review, theoretical framework highlights the central theory that is used to describe the relationship between various positive psychological variables and knowledge workers' engagement.

Job-Demand Resource Theory

Job Demand Resource theory (JDR) proposed by Bakker & Demerouti (2007) is based on the presumption that while each profession can have its unique threat related to work stress; these elements can be classified into two broad types: job resource and job demands. This theory can be applied to numerous jobs and occupations in respect of various resources and demands. Here job demands means "physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort or skills and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs." While work demands aren't necessarily bad, when meeting those requirements requires high effort from which the employee has not recovered sufficiently, they may turn into work stressors. On the other hand, Job resources refer to "those physical, psychological, social, or organizational

aspects of the job that are either/or functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs stimulate personal growth, learning, and development." Job resources need not cope with job demands, but they are valuable as well. Such job resources help in raising the engagement of employees.

Based on this, JDR theory explains the relation of numerous job and personal resources in engaging employees. Thus, the relation of numerous resources comprising of workplace resources like organizational virtuousness, leadership styles, and personal resources like psychological capital, and mindfulness as well as the relation of such resources in enhancing engagement, can be explained using JDR theory as this theory is the key theory focusing on numerous job resources and impact of such resources in enhancing engagement.

Research Gaps

Most of the study on engagement has been conducted by taking into consideration different sectors like hospitality, public or private sector organizations, and by considering different employees like banking employees and frontline employees. However, to date, studies on knowledge workers' engagement is scarce (Toth *et al.*, 2019). Limited studies have been conducted on knowledge workers' engagement (Toth *et al.*, 2019) and Toth *et al*. (2019) suggested conducting future studies on the role of psychological capital in enhancing knowledge workers' engagement. Moreover, concerning some of the positive psychological variables namely: organizational virtuousness and mindfulness, there are comparatively a smaller number of studies on these variables and their impact on engagement (Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019; Singh *et al*., 2018).

Furthermore, most of the studies have been conducted by focusing on the impact of job resources and personal resources on work and job engagement but less attention has been paid on the impact of these resources on enhancing knowledge workers' engagement and there is scarce research that examines the connection between organizational virtuousness and engagement (Singh *et al.*, 2018). Research requires to be performed by examining the mediating role of employee well-being (happiness in organizational context) in virtuousness and engagement relation (Singh *et al.*, 2018).

In a recent review on servant leadership, Eva *et al*. (2019) suggested servant leadership could be compared with other leadership styles to find out which leadership style has more impact on outcomes. So, this gap can be filled by comparing the servant leadership style with the

transformational one which will help in getting better insight regarding which leadership style predicts outcomes more favorably. Likewise, Aboramadan *et al.* (2020) highlighted the need to conduct a comparative study on the role of different leadership styles and their effect on engagement.

IV. Rationale of the Study

Though numerous researches have been conducted to date on work engagement, limited research has been conducted by particularly focusing on positive psychological variables to determine their impact on engagement. Based on existing literature, some of the gaps in the area of engagement have been identified. This study will add to the existing engagement literature by contributing in this area. As the objective of the study is to focus on knowledge workers' engagement, so it will be helpful in determining the impact of numerous positive psychological variables like psychological capital, transformational leadership, and servant leadership on knowledge workers' engagement which have not paid attention in the previous research. Moreover, no researcher has conducted previous research by taking the intervening role of employee well-being between positive psychology (organizational virtuousness and mindfulness) and employee's work engagement. So, this study will further contribute to engagement literature by focusing on the role of employee well-being as a mediating variable between the aforesaid independent variable and their impact on engagement. Similarly, this study will contribute by conducting a comparative study between different leadership styles namely: servant leadership and transformational leadership, and their influence on employee's work engagement which will further contribute to the engagement literature in getting a better insight about which leadership style among these two will be more beneficial and impactful in enhancing engagement.

As observed by Gunasekara & Zheng (2019) that mindfulness- engagement relationship have not been examined to a large extent and according to Singh *et al.* (2018) to date a smaller number of researches have been conducted on examining virtuousness and engagement relationship, so the study will further contribute to the existing literature by including these variables and studying the relationship of these variables with engagement. Thus, this study aims at determining the role of numerous positive psychological variables in enhancing knowledge workers' engagement in the Indian context to get a better understanding of the factors predicting knowledge workers' engagement. A study on knowledge workers' engagement will be beneficial in determining several factors that helps in enhancing their

engagement level. So, this study will be helpful for the organizations employing knowledge workers in dealing with them efficiently as well as in keeping them engaged so that they will work effectively which will benefit the whole organizations as engaged employees are less likely to leave the organizations and work for the success of the whole organization.

Moreover, as reported by Gallup (2020) over 51% of employees being "not engaged" in work and 13% of employees being "actively disengaged" (Harter, 2020), so this study will further help in enhancing the engagement level of employees so that number of disengaged employees in total workforce can be reduced. This will not only be helpful for the organizations but for the employees too as engaged individuals are pleased with their task and life as compared to disengaged employees. Along with this, this study will be beneficial for the managers as managers can focus on numerous positive psychological variables that can be helpful in enhancing the engagement of employees which will be beneficial for the whole organization as engaged employees are happier employees and put their best efforts for the success of the organization. By adopting different positive leadership style like transformational and servant leadership style, managers can influence the subordinates to be fully engaged and this will also help in building a strong and effective bond between the employer and the employees.

V. Objectives and Hypothesis

The study aims to determine the effect of positive psychological variables on knowledge workers' engagement. Therefore, the study aims to fulfill the following objectives:

1.) To study the effect of positive psychological variables on knowledge workers' engagement.

2.) To study the effect of positive psychological variables on employee well-being.

3.) To study the effect of employee well-being on knowledge workers' engagement.

4.) To check whether employee well-being mediates between positive psychological variables and knowledge workers' engagement.

Hypothesis

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following hypothesis are framed:

Numerous positive psychological variables play an important role in enhancing employee's engagement towards their work. Based on the literature review, various positive psychological variables impacting engagement are as follows: organizational virtuousness (Singh *et al.*,

2018), psychological capital (Wirawan *et al*., 2020), mindfulness (Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019), servant leadership (Aboramadan *et al*., 2020) and transformational leadership (Lee *et al.*, 2019) as all these positive psychological variables helps in enhancing engagement of employees towards their work. Based on this, the hypothesis is framed as:

H01: Positive psychological variables are positively associated with knowledge workers' engagement.

Various positive psychological variables are favorably associated with the well-being of employees like organizational virtuousness (Ahmed *et al*., 2018; Magnier-Watanabe *et al*., 2020), mindfulness (Pinck & Sonnentag, 2018), transformational leadership (Ding *et al.*, 2020), servant leadership (Clarence *et al*., 2020) and psychological capital (Gupta & Shaheen, 2018). Based on aforesaid studies showing the favorable association between positive psychological variables and engagement, it is hypothesised as:

H02: Positive psychological variables are positively associated with employee well-being.

Various studies have found the association between employee well-being and engagement of employees towards their task (Singh *et al*., 2018; Wang *et al.*, 2017) like positive emotions found to intervene in the resilience-engagement relationship partially (Wang *et al*., 2017) such that the transformational leadership style helps in building positive emotions which work in enhancing employee's well-being and increase in employee well-being is favorably associated with engaging employees (Wang *et al*., 2017). Based on previous studies on employee well-being and engagement relation it is hypothesised that:

H03: Employee well-being is positively associated with knowledge workers' engagement.

Positive psychological variables like organizational virtuousness (Singh *et al*., 2018), mindfulness (Puolakanaho *et al*., 2018), servant leadership (Clarence *et al.*, 2020), transformational leadership (Ding *et al*., 2020) and psychological capital (Gupta & Shaheen, 2018) are associated with well-being of employees and numerous employee well-being indicators like positive affect, job satisfaction, psychological well-being, and subjective well-being. Moreover, positive psychological variables favorably impact engagement and well-being of employees is also favorably associated with engagement, based on this, it is hypothesised that:

H04: Employee well-being mediates between positive psychological variables and knowledge workers' engagement.

VI. Research Methodology

The aim of developing the methodology for research is to examine the numerous objectives of the study. It consists of a systematic procedure for collecting and analyzing data. Along with this, the methodology section also includes sampling design, research instruments and tools and methods for collecting the data, and statistical tests used to analyze the data.

a. Research Design

Exploratory cum descriptive design would be followed by describing the knowledge workers' perspective regarding the impact of positive psychological variables (organizational virtuousness, transformational leadership, servant leadership, psychological capital, and mindfulness) on employee well-being which thus impact knowledge workers' engagement.

b. Type of Data

To achieve the objectives, set out in the study, both primary and secondary data will be collected.

c. Sampling Plan

1. Sampling Unit: The sample would comprise of knowledge workers in India.

2.Sampling Size: The sample size would consist of 600 knowledge workers comprising of academics, accountants, engineers, lawyers etc. The sample size can be increased according to the requirement of the study

3. Sampling Area: The sample would be drawn from knowledge workers working in various organizations in India. The purpose behind choosing knowledge workers for the study is that, to date limited studies have been studied in respect of knowledge workers' engagement (Toth *et al*., 2019). So, a study on knowledge workers would help in getting a better understanding of factors impacting their engagement level.

4. Sampling Technique: A mix of random and convenience sampling would be used in order to collect the data from numerous knowledge workers working in different organizations in India.

d. Research Instrument

To collect the data from the respondents, standardized scales will be used.

e. Research Tools

Descriptive statistical methods can be used, such as mean and standard deviation to study the characteristics of the sample. To show the path and degree of relationship between the variables, correlation and regression will be used. Besides, other specialized tools can also be used if necessary, according to the objective of the study.

VII. Tentative Chapter Plan

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter will include a summary of the variables included in the study. Along with this, this section would also highlight the present status of knowledge workers' engagement.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter would provide an analysis of the literature concerning the variables chosen in the study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter three will emphasize the importance of conducting the analysis. This chapter will mention the aims of the study. The detailed research methodology, including the sampling design, the research instruments and tools, and the questionnaire construction, the survey method, and the statistical tests used to analyze the results, would be identified.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation

The fourth chapter will cover data analysis and findings interpretation.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

The final chapter will contain the study's results. It would include discussions based on observations and outcomes. Moreover, this section would include the shortcomings of the study and guidance for future research.

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Signature of Supervisor **Signature of Scholar**

Signature of Director

(With official seal)